

## EMPLOYEE SKILLS DRIVE COMPANY'S SUCCESS

**ABOUT GENERAL AVIATION & ELECTRONICS MFG. CO.** General A & E was founded in 1954 by John Baker Sr., who worked for Dumont Laboratories as a purchasing agent. Dumont Laboratories helped popularize television. Not satisfied with the performance of most suppliers, Baker decided to go out on his own. His first two customers were Robinson Aviation and Curtis Wright Electronics, so the company became General Aviation & Electronics. By the time John Baker Jr. took over the company in 1979, General A & E had moved to its current location in Hackensack, New Jersey; by 1985 the building had doubled in size and added automation, along with ISO 9001 and AS 9100 credentials. Now in its third generation of ownership with around 30 employees, General A & E has introduced a fully automated laser/punch combination machine for "lights out" production. The company sells to customers in the military, aerospace, medical, and commercial electronics industries.

**THE CHALLENGE.** General A & E required workforce training to improve employee skills, increase revenue, and capitalize on the closure of some competitors. Military and aerospace customers like Sikorsky and Raytheon were requiring higher quality and faster delivery times. In order to keep up with those demands, the company decided to invest in its employees. General A & E had engaged the New Jersey Manufacturing Extension Partnership (NJMEP), a NIST MEP affiliate, on numerous projects in the past, including ISO certification, Nadcap compliance, and Lean training. This time, the company reached out to NJMEP to request assistance with workforce training in planning, strategizing, and gathering market and competitive data for applications in sales, marketing, customer service, e-commerce, process efficiency, and organizational development.

**MEP CENTER'S ROLE.** NJMEP developed and delivered a training plan for General A & E, and assisted with the application and management of a New Jersey Department of Labor (NJDOLE) customized training grant to reduce the training costs. Ten General A & E employees participated in an eight-month training with NJMEP. The training covered Lean tools and techniques, including Value Stream Mapping, cellular flow, project management. Participants took courses in strategic planning, marketing, plan development, business administration, and succession planning. The training helped General A & E meet the requirements for a more skilled workforce, and the focus on marketing paid off in the company's participation in trade shows in New Jersey and Pennsylvania. In addition to cost savings, General A & E saw an increase in sales to offset its substantial investment in workforce training and process improvements.

**"NJMEP is focused solely on manufacturers like us. Their employees have spent their careers in manufacturing, and they truly understand our business and our needs for training. They have a record of helping us accomplish our objectives."**

-John Baker, Owner & President

## RESULTS



Increased sales by **\$229,500**



Cost savings of **\$110,000**, with \$24,000 from grant funding



Invested **\$240,000** in new processes and products

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